

PYROTECHNICS

THE NOW & THEN NEWSLETTER OF
GENERAL TECHNICS

PERPETRATED LARGELY BY
JEFF DUNTEMANN
& CAROL DUNTEMANN

NO. 20 APRIL 1979

THE TECH OF LOVING

I've fielded a number of compliments in my life, but none please me so much as those which compliment me on the relationship Carol and I share. It is what I work at the hardest and talk about the least. I talk about it so little, in fact, that some people have thought it was luck, or fate, or some inborn talent, or maybe magic. BS. It was just hard work. It's still hard work. But I say with pride that it is the finest thing I have ever done, or will ever do.

I've heard it said (by morons who consider themselves better than us) that science fiction people are social misfits. If that's true, then I wear it proudly. Being a social misfit these days is largely a matter of not being In Style. Certain of us seem to be born either unable or unwilling to be In Style. But since being In Style these days means empty posturing, phony intellectual nihilism, and furious, uncaring balling while guarding your own ass so hard it squeaks, then I think we haven't lost very much.

What Carol and I have done is carefully, methodically, systematically constructed a relationship which we believe will stand against anything. "Love" has become so devalued a word that I hate to use it; what we have seems so much better. But love it is, and this issue I would like to talk a little bit about how it's done.

I speak solely from the male point of view. I was raised male, and GT is still a predominantly male organization. But what I say is equally applicable to women, and I invite the women of GT to correct me if I'm wrong.

Rule #1: Love Grows Out Of Friendship. No exceptions. The woman you ball the same day you meet her may be many things, including a lot of fun and good in bed, but she is not yet your friend. I've seen a number of relationships start on a spark of pure sexual combustion, but unless the participants developed a friendship between them they didn't last six months on the outside. And what is friendship? Only this: friendship is caring about another person whether or not there's anything in it for you. Naturally, this feeling must extend in both directions if friendship is to grow.

There's a highly successful way of making and keeping friends of the opposite sex, but you makeout artists may not like it much. Put sex aside. Completely. Seal your sexuality in a Mason jar and stash it in the root cellar for awhile. It won't go away, I promise you. And when you let it out again, you may find it's a lot easier to control. Jumping on a woman's body with sexual innuendo dripping off every seam of your jeans is the world's finest way to be thought an insufferable asshole. And it's hardly the way to make points with women.

That done, establish communication. This consists of intelligent speaking, and intelligent listening. Both. Damn few science fiction people need instruction on how to phrase a concept in good spoken English. I've met quite a number who could learn a little about listening. If you can't listen to what someone is saying, you don't care about what is said, so friendship stops right there. Care about what she says. Weigh it in

your mind. See where the ideas come from. Notice biases, real cognition, and flights of imagination. See where you agree and disagree, but do more. See why you disagree. Ask for more information. Finally, carefully, give your own analysis of what she's said, but always keep her basic idea at the focus. Don't merely use her ideas as a stage to trot more of your own ideas out for display. Through it all, strive to be genuinely interested in what she's thinking and how she thinks. A lot of people these days forget or never experience the tremendous charge it is to truly discover where a person is coming from. It's worth shifting your center of attention outside yourself.

At this point you have the basics of a good platonic friendship. Practice giving, with no fish-hooks attached. Each of us has something we can do for others. Find out what you can offer, and offer it freely. It might be the back seat of your car, use of your electric typewriter, an explanation of calculus, or just a kind heart and a knack for empathy. Do it for its own sake. It's fun. It makes friends. And you will find people offering you what they have on the same terms.

Rule #2: Touching Is Multidimensional. A pernicious little quirk in American culture holds that all touching has a sexual component. That's not true, nor is it that simple. Touching can be communication. It is also a great human need, above and apart from sexual consequences. Learn to touch unselfishly. That means touching a person to fill her needs rather than yours. A good starting point is using touch to communicate empathy. Clapsed hands, or a hand on the arm, can tell a woman that you're "with" her in a difficult conversation. It can also communicate sympathy or encouragement at times better than words.

Touching demands that you respect a person's privacy. There are moods as well as places where a woman may not want to be touched. Learn to read the signs, and go by them. A touch may be similar to a personal question. Sometimes it is appropriate, sometimes not. Knowing which is which is the great skill of friendship. Forcing your touch on a woman is likely to get you avoided like the plague.

Carrying a friendship upward from touching toward sex is very tricky business. Many friendships just can't support that kind of closeness. If a woman declines sexual advances, don't push it. Pursue the friendship as a friendship, and a sexual relationship may evolve in time, with gentleness and empathy. Then again, it may not. I have many very close friendships that sex would simply destroy. Irrelevant. Within the terms of the friendship I love deeply and am loved in return. Friendships tend to find their own level. Enjoy that level for what it is, and don't worry that it didn't become what you wanted it to. Like all else in life, a friendship is a compromise.

Rule #3: Lose Jealousy. Jealousy usually isn't a problem until a sexual component develops in a friendship. And then, it can make people do the damndest things. But it has nothing at all to do with sex; it springs wholly from insecurity.

GT
**GENERAL
TECHNICS**

GENERAL TECHNICS is an organization of fannish techies (and not techish fannies, as some wiseass reported) who share data, resources, and experience in pursuit of a good time and occasional profit. The group meets mainly at cons, hamfests, and private Berserker Weekends.

MEMBERSHIP is terribly difficult to obtain. you must somehow scrape up a number of 15¢ stamps, and then at great effort write a letter explaining what your qualifications as a techie are to

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including those stamps. If the abovementioned person can read your handwriting you are an APPRENTICE TECHIE and entitled to call yourself a member of General Technics. You will also receive PYROTECHNICS until your stamps run out. Renewal of membership is synonymous with sending more stamps. If you decide to quit, we will use one of your stamps to send the rest back to you. If you're nuts enough to want to become a SECRET MASTER UV TECHNOLOGY (SMUT) you had better write to

Tullio Proni
530 West Walnut
Kalamazoo MI 49007

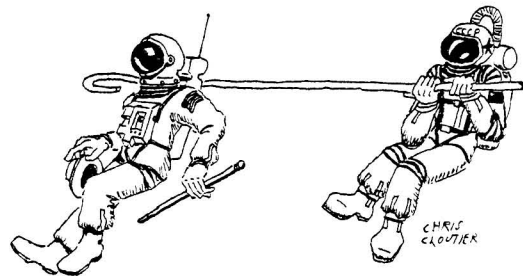
because I don't have anything to do with it.
ANYTHING ELSE, ask me. I may not know but I guess better than anybody else around here.

Jealousy is the fear that Someone Else is going to "take" your friend away from you. Throttle back for a moment and think about that. A woman becomes your friend because she chooses to. Something about you appeals to her. She may choose to end the relationship as well. You can't prevent that by building a wall around her, or by beating her over the head with a guilt trip. The only way to prevent termination of a relationship is by keeping what made it work to begin with. That means working as hard during every moment of the relationship as you worked when you began it. No coasting allowed. Too many men consider marriage a sort of mortgage; they take title to a woman and she is "his" no matter what he does or fails to do. To them, marriage is a license not to try anymore. Under those circumstances, it doesn't surprise me at all that one of three marriages disintegrates into splinters of jealousy embedded in a substrate of pain. No one can "take" a lover away from you if your relationship is truly alive and healthy.

An old cornball adage goes: If you want to know if something (or someone) is yours, set it free. If it returns to you it will always be yours; if it fails to return it was never yours in the first place. Lots of truth in that. It's unrealistic to expect never to feel jealousy, and difficult in the extreme never to act on it. But you must smother it under whatever you can find, or it will rule you.

Ten years ago this July, I met a woman at a silly church function. I followed the guidelines outlined above. She became my friend, my confidant, my lover, and finally my wife. We have been careful to give each other our freedom, and in doing so cemented a strong relationship into one that will last until our deaths. It works, people.

To sum up: Be a friend first.
Be gentle.
Listen.
Care about what you hear.
Touch carefully.
Respect her privacy.
Compromise.
When you fail, ask forgiveness.
When she asks forgiveness, forgive.
Let her be free.
Tell her she's pretty.
And never, never stop trying.



¶ BIODATA

JAMES DELONGPRE

was born and raised (more or less) in Grand Rapids Michigan. Life was downright dull until the seventh grade when, having nothing better to do, I picked up one of my brother's Heinlein books and got myself hooked on SF. Then the next year my English teacher assigned The Hobbit for a book report and I've been hooked on fantasy ever since. Then, after graduating from high school and Grand Rapids Junior College with an A.S. degree (which is good for wiping your A.S. if you run out of T.P.) I journeyed up here to Michigan Tech and met a strange person named Todd Johnson in one of my classes and he had this newsletter called PyroTechnics and, upon seeing my eyes light up when hearing of all the goings-on of the group, he invited me to join. Being very busy and knowing nothing about electronics, I did very little else of note that year. But then the new year arrived, and with it came Windycon V (it even rhymes. Almost.) So now I'm going to build me something to see if I can make an LED blink. If this succeeds, I'll make a robot out of my mother's old vacuum cleaner. (Step Three is walking on water, Jim. But it's a big one.--Ed.)

BARRY GEHM

was born on November 9, 1955, picking up my first set of scars in the process (no, not my navel.) I spent the first three years of my life on the outskirts of Metropolis, IL. (He means, of course, the Galactic Capital--Ed.) My earliest memories are of the little red-headed girl down the road, and the beautiful view our house had of the cemetery. (Through most of my life I have lived in houses overlooking cemeteries. This is not so much a reflection of a craving for quiet neighborhoods or a morbid taste in playmates so much as a reflection of my father's profession: minister. So was Mark Twain's.)

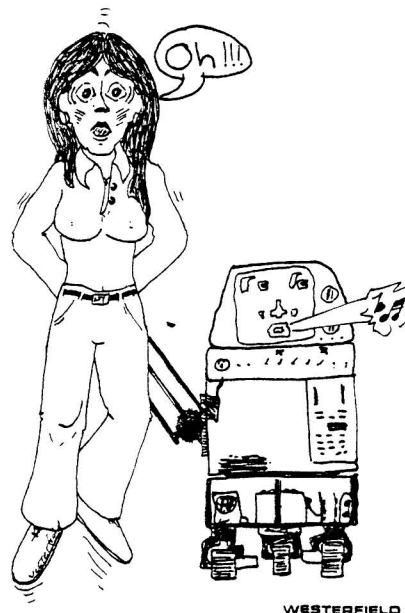
I went to first grade in Collinsville IL, second through eleventh in Okawville IL and graduated from High school in Lebanon IL. (Disclaimer: most of these towns are very small and all of them are a good three hundred miles from Chicago, of which not all of Illinois is a suburb.) When in grade school I discovered a

passion for science and later for science fiction. I spent my youth reading my dad's SF collection and smelling up the basement, learning to dodge flying glass fragments and inhaling poisonous vapors.

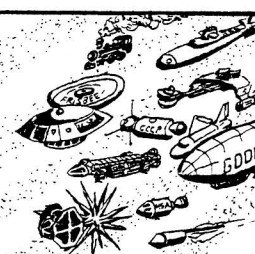
In school I was a studious nonconformist (i.e., immediately suspect) although during my junior year my native charm surfaced and I ceased getting hit. I even became marginally popular. Ah, youth...

In 1972 I enrolled at the University of Illinois. In 1976 I emerged with a BS in biochemistry and chemistry clutched in my hand. Although many heroic and pointless deeds were done in this period, few of them have anything to do with techdom. Let it be said that I helped build and man a tennis ball cannon emplacement, collaborated on an invisible man movie, and began playing with computers.

Then went to graduate school at Michigan State University, where I discovered science fiction fandom and Renee Sieber. You can imagine my surprise. I also met Bill Higgin's, the other half of the official GT wit, and his enormous spy network. Bill and I go round and round and the music comes out here. It also comes out in CoEvolution Quarterly and Jerry Pournelle's space colony anthology. The LS Song, Mesklinite cartoons, the Flat Space Society, the Egg of the Phoenix, Greasy Kid Stf, Procrasticon. If these names don't mean anything to you, just ask. Better yet, don't. (Platt!) Separately and together, Bill and Renee were part of these with me, and my two best friends in East Lansing. Now Bill is at Fermilab in Chicago and Renee is at the House of Isher in Kalamazoo, and I miss them both.



DARK STARLOST IN SPACE: 2001



MORE



THE GT INFORMATION HANDBOOK

By now everybody's gotten one, and more than two thirds of the GT questionnaires have come back. Enthusiasm for the idea has been overwhelming, almost a universal feeling of 'why didn't we do this a long time ago?'

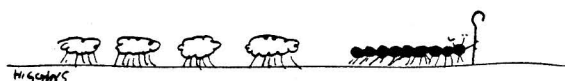
"This" is the GT Information Handbook, a complete guide, if not to being a techie, then at least to being in General Technics. The idea came up when Dave Alexander Nill Levine sent me a partial index of PyroTechnics up to issue 17, minus the first three issues. It was marvelous, and showed a helluva lot of work, and was far too good to waste. He had done the compilation on a PDP-8 program his father wrote for a research project. It's really great, as you'll realize when you see it. It will enable you to find anything that has ever been in Pyro from Day 1. (I tremble to think of the Back Issue requests I'm going to get once this thing gets into your hands. .)

With Dave's index as a core, I started building on the idea. We started GT as a techie backscratching agency anyway--you help me with my weak points and I'll help you with yours. The very best way to do that is with personal correspondence not routed through some central agency (me) since I am only one man with only ten fingers and a wife who likes to see me once in a while. What we have to have is a Mob list including what people have to offer as techie backscratchers.

And you will not believe what some people know about. I have gotten several questionnaires back with two typewritten sheets of expertise offered to the GT consciousness. Every damned computer I ever heard of (plus a few new ones) has one or more GT adherents. Every branch of the physical and biological sciences seems to be pretty well covered. It's not surprising that electronics is top dog, but sewing, cooking, winemaking, and natural cheese are also included. No matter what you want to know, somebody somewhere in GT should be able to cast some light on it.

The views of my beloved sister Gretchen "Computers Are a Communist Plot" Van Dorn notwithstanding, the Handbook will also include a GT Home Computer Summary. What I want is a little description of every home computer in the GT family, how much ROM and RAM, what mass memory, what peripherals, what languages and major software you have. If you have one or more home computers in your possession (no fair claiming the CRAY-1 at work, you showoff!) send me the specs right away. Somebody else may have what you've been looking for.

The last two issues of GT, as you have seen, have been Special Guest issues, and I'm sure you'll agree, they've been dynamite. The Handbook will have a detailed summary of how to put together a Pyro, with loads of helpful hints and encouragements.



MESKINITE
SHEPHERD

So, if you've been holding out sending that questionnaire back because your lumbago's been acting up, or because your dog peed on it, or some other lame excuse, get your act together and respond. If you lost the form, just jot down your current and school addresses, phone numbers, and what you feel you'd like to answer questions on. Send it to me posthaste. I'm serious about this being a membership requirement of GT. Ya gotta pitch in. It's the only decent thing to do.



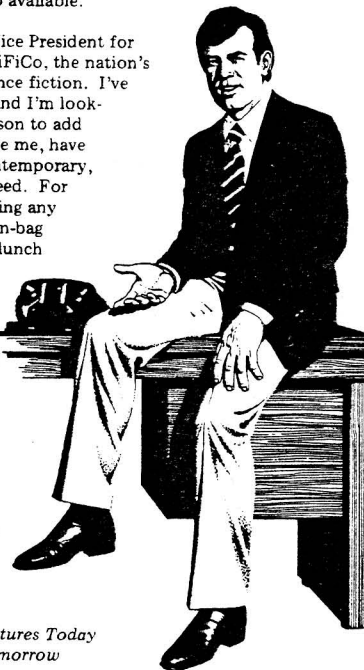
The little item below and on page 5 was an announcement put together by Chuck Ott on the typesetting gear where he works. It announced a Chicago writers' conference, and is just too damned fine to waste.

Are you the writer SciFiCo needs?

The best in your field? Then SciFiCo may be the best for you. If you're a trained science fiction writer, with three to five years experience in all sub-genres and a steady work record, SciFiCo has a state-of-the-art job waiting for you. We're hiring writers right now for time-travel stories, first-contact stories, anti-utopias, sword & sorcery and many other fields too numerous to mention. Management positions are also available.

Hi, I'm Mike Dugan, Vice President for Creative Services at SciFiCo, the nation's largest supplier of science fiction. I've got a good team now and I'm looking for my kind of person to add to it — people who, like me, have the kind of young, contemporary, with-it creativity we need. For example, I'm not wearing any underwear, and I brown-bag sprout sandwiches for lunch every day.

If you're looking for professional and personal growth in a company with a winning track record, a history of innovation and the best medical and dental insurance in the industry, turn the page and have a closer look at SciFiCo.



SciFiCo: Alternate Futures Today
for a Better Future Tomorrow

FROM HENRY B. RUH (Publisher, ATV Magazine, PO Box 1347, Bloomington IN 47402)--Touche! I just read one of your disgustingly funny issues of whatever you call your news/pun letter. Whatever. I enjoyed your rip on ARRL/Wayne Green. Having been involved with both for about 10 years, and corresponded heavily with others who have been ripped by both. Your prose on WARC is unfortunately not entirely correct since it reflects only Mr. Green's point of view written I suspect more to sell magazines and shake up the troops than from any point of honest evaluation of what will happen next fall in Geneva. 1) One must remember that Wayne was once a mucky-muck with ARRL, and is a life member. He split when he recognized the rhetorical bullshit that ARRL fogies were handing down was not to further ham radio, but to further ARRL. Shame, because they could have done a better job of both. ARRL is at the back of the tech pack, with old ideas and an eye toward profit at any cost, to spend more on profit making. Green is also a money-hungry person who wants to sell magazines. He couldn't make much (when he edited) CO, which is still in business, and his forte was RTTY and ATV. (Radioteletype and Amateur Television) Mostly RTTY. After a stint (editing) CO he got pissed off at (its publisher) Cowan, and created 73. I could tell you most of the sordid story of how CO was made and stolen, but not in print! (Sigh. So everybody says. I suppose it's common knowledge he lost it as part of his divorce settlement, but I'd love to know the rest.--Ed.) It ain't nice! Green wants bucks, big bucks, and recognizes accurately where the growth areas are, and exploits them for whatever he can get. Great American Dream Machine if ever there was one. Green was a delegate to the last general WARC (1959) in which no one was prepared. Consequently, we all got our oxes gored. This

time we are better off, with good preparation. As a member of the FCC WARC committee since it was formed, and now its exec. secretary, I feel I have some knowledge of what is going on. Hams will again get gored, not because of any level or preparedness, but because we are politically and economically unimportant. These are the criteria which will determine who gets what and why. Thus, all the technical preparation in the world will not save ham radio, nor will Green's pleas and domesaying in 73. We are well prepared domestically. A lot of effort went into the amateur WARC recommendations my committee provided to the FCC. Even more effort went into international relations on the part of the ARRL, which largely talked other (foreign) amateur groups into supporting the US positions. Thus we should have little intragroup problems and can concentrate on the intergroup problems. I suspect we will lose a part of the 40 meter band, and most likely it will be shifted downward about 100 KHz. 80 may be a close call, although the military likes the hams where they are, a plus for us. Shortwave broadcasting will cut into military frequencies more than non-military, so our real problem will be keeping our freqs from the military, which will try and move in on the nearest band to what they lose to broadcast. Shortwave broadcast is not popular in South America. Only in the 3rd world and commie asshole countries where they think that the Americans and Europeans will listen to and believe their commie shit, which we don't and won't. The USSR just bought 24 new 500KW, that's half a megawatt, which they will undoubtedly couple to antennas of at least 10 dB gain, for a 5 megawatt ERP signal, to pump more jive commie shit in English around the world. Undoubtedly, at least 2 of these will be near the 7 mhz band, and possibly inside it. Since the USSR doesn't give a shit about international agreements, we can do little to kick them out either. Next time remember who is

We're visiting Bulk Editing Plant No. 3, the newest of SciFiCo's six editing mills and the largest non-union employer in Kenosha, Wisconsin.

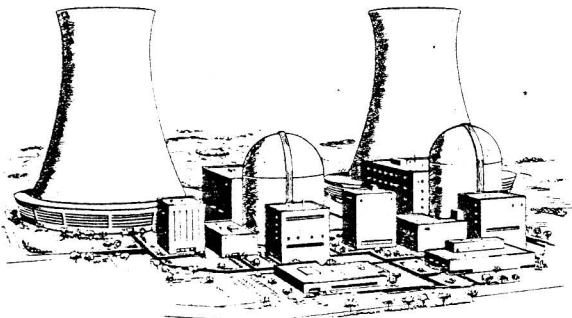
Here, palletized Raw Crude Science Fiction (RCSF) arrives from our suppliers all over the five-state area. In a series of steps directed from our computerized Process Control Center, each batch of RCSF is converted into publishable form by boiling it down to approximately half its initial wordage. Nothing is wasted: the "prompt industrial scrap" generated here is sold to the confession and detective story industries.

After keystroke capture and composition, the science fiction is printed, chopped into 192-page segments and bound and boxed for the retail market.

Let's pull a finished novel from the conveyor belt and examine it. Ah, it's this month's best seller, *Only One Earthman Can Save The Galaxy Now*. Because the book is discounted, I can't reveal the nationally-famous author's name, but you'd recognize him in a minute.

It's a fascinating book, the haunting story of a character, in context, with a problem, whose efforts to resolve the problem are increasingly revelatory but unsuccessful. Finally, of course, the character solves the problem and receives a reward validating his worth and the importance of the problem.

That's the kind of hard-hitting, relevant, low-shelf-life science fiction we like to see here at SciFiCo.



Want to be part of the cutting edge of the literature for the 'Eighties and beyond? Remember, SciFiCo has nowhere to go but up!

In the Midwest area, contact the Windy City SF Writers' Workshop. They're sort of our minor league.

The next Windy meeting will be:

Saturday, February 10, 1979, at 1:00 pm

in the same old place: Dick Kearns' house, which is:

7769 Nordica
Niles, IL 60648

Rides can be arranged, and if you reply before January 27, you get a special Promptness Prize — a map showing how to get there. Send your naively enthusiastic replies to Chuck Ott, Box 1480, Chicago, IL 60690 or call me in the evenings at 276-1219.

selling them the hardware too. It ain't Mexico or Canada! I think the State Dept should put a lock on our selling hardware to be used against us, even on the airwaves. That's enough for now. If you want more info, drop me a note.

(Thanks for writing, Henry. I can't add much to that. My views on 3rd world politicking are a good deal less printable than yours. We will simply have to wait and see. In a way I almost hope the 3rd world turn WARC into so much of a circus that the Western nations will withdraw and let them diddle themselves silly in a corner all their own. Shortwavers don't respect band plans right now, so there should be little difference if we ignore them. Let me plug Henry's magazine here; it's a helluva rag for TV freaks in the ham world, and let me double-reiterate that every techie oughta have a ham license. In any case, if the 3rd world does gobble down the ham bands with nary a scrap left over, I have a few ideas of a...delicate nature, which I will not commit to print. Buttonhole me at the next con and we'll have a private seminar on possibilities relating to future radio communications...if you get my drift...)

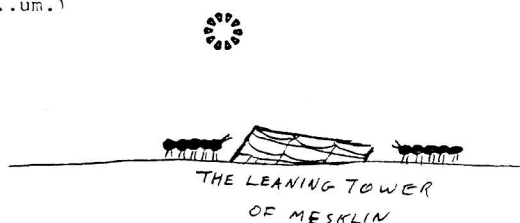
FROM MARK EVANS---...A new company of fannish interest has been incorporated in Columbus. S.H.E.A., Inc, of which I am a founder, plans to rent radio equipment, and possibly other stuff, to conventions. Anyone who has ever worked for a worldcon can testify as to how important good radio equipment can be. As near as we can determine, S.H.E.A. Inc. is the only place to rent such equipment on a short-term basis. The equipment will be available to worldcons, regional, local, and non-SF conventions. We should have the equipment available at Marcon if anyone wants to look at it. If anyone wants information about our services, they should write to me.

(Hey, Mark, you didn't tell us what the acronym stands for! That's not fair! In any case, I recommend Standard 2-way FM radios, which are available for the business band. I have an amateur version of the model, and have beat the living hell out of it for three years without any ill effect. I'd like to know more about your operation, what radios you have, your prices, things like that. The publicity sure couldn't hurt, and it's operations like yours which spawned the original CF concept.)

FROM ROXANNE WEIDA--I am writing to request membership in that great (grate?) (grait?) (Try stupendous--Ed.) organization known on Earth as General Technics. About my "qualifications":

- 1) I can plug in a TV radio and change light bulbs.
- 2) I'm cute.
- 3) I'm female (or most of the time anyway.)
- 4) I'm reasonable at the following:
 - a. Needlepoint
 - b. Macaroni casseroles
 - c. Black Russians
 - d. Dismantling small appliances
 - e. ... um.
- 5) Next quarter I will be getting three new roomies which are already members. (This is an act of self preservation.) (And also one of great courage--Ed.)
- 6) I'm completely insane. (The three roomies are Al Duester, Todd Johnson, and Bob Trembley.)

(Well, Roxanne, welcome to the monkey house. I have to admit, you do know how to get on my good side. Keep an eye on those guys, and watch out for IC's in your bed. They're not as scary as frogs, but they're pointier. And once I list your qualifications in the General Technics Information Handbook, expect a number of inquiries about your...um.)



CMOS FONTEMA

Who'll be the first to build a Zabriskan fontema with more brains than a Zabriskan fontema?

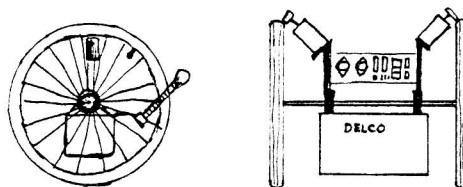
A brand new member of GT who encountered us at Iggy, Charles Galway, wrote to suggest a whole new type of robot, with body slung between two old bicycle wheels. He thought it was a basically silly idea, but after a few moments' thought, I decided it was anything but.

Such a robot could not tip over. The wheels are driven independently at the rims, and if something impedes the rotation of the wheels, the robot body will tend to "climb" up the wheels and possibly invert itself. (Assuming very strong motors.) This is easily avoided by setting up one or more mercury switches such that power is cut off to the motors when the orientation of the main body deviates from vertical by some number of degrees.

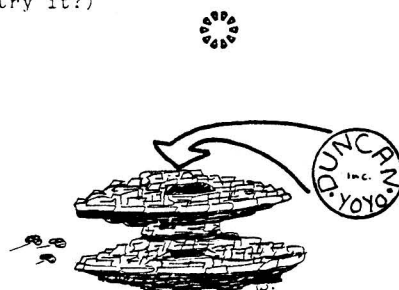
If you'll look at the diagram, you'll find that this configuration strongly resembles the brainless, lovable Zabriskan fontema from Doc Smith's Lensman series, the creature which was so dumb it became a synonym for brainlessness. GT robot technology has become sufficiently sophisticated to put all the necessary works in a small body scarcely twice as large as a car battery.

Advantages? The soft inflatable tires provide an automatic bumper to keep collisions from becoming too painful. It could roll over curbs and holes without tipping or even becoming terribly rattled. It would look silly as hell with an LED face in front and a waggly little radio antenna tail in back. I think it's a marvelous design.

Ok, who's gonna build it?



(Editor's Late Addendum--Rod Smith wrote to me a few weeks later with virtually the same idea. His fontema had a stabilizer arm ahead and behind to prevent "body climb" or oscillations. I fear, however, that these stabilizers would be prone to bending and breaking on curbs and things. Best to do without. Also, any number of people have written to suggest using bicycle brake mechanisms as robot hands. The linkage should work well in such an application; however, the springs on bike brakes are almighty strong, and I would suggest removing them and replacing them with a home-brew spring having a little less ass. Again, who's gonna try it?)



THE MOB

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Jonathan Babbini 815 South Blvd.	(312) 866-8154 Evanston IL 60202	Jim Fuerstenberg 624 Elder Lane	(312) 446-9120 Winnetka IL 60093
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ZAPS FROM THE BACKWOODS DE GEORGE EWING

The French Atlantic Affair, by Ernest Lehman. Absolute must! It's all about a bunch of unemployed techies who mastermind the hijacking of an ocean liner, and how they are foiled by W6VC/MM2 who has an Atlas 210X in his suitcase and blows the whistle, and two writers; W6LS who is a screenwriter in LA and a fat, horny novelist on shipboard, not to mention a Lois Lane type in Paris. All the hamming and computer tech is handled impeccably; one typo on the exact ten meter phone band edge. The thing is raunchy as hell. I counted eighteen quote bulging crotches unquote. It is also incredibly violent. The good guys slaughter 174 people in a lifeboat with hideously painful neurotoxins, and the damsel-in-distress carves a terrorist captor into little twitching, squirting pieces of flesh with a washroom mirror. Read it. You'll laugh; you'll cheer; you'll puke; you'll smile. You'll wish you'd written it and gotten a fortune in movie rights.

The other night, as I sat listening to the pipsquawkers on 10 meters beginning to drop out and contemplating a hefty minus 37 Farenheit on the airlock door thermometer, strange things began flickering before my eyes on the tube: A mile-long conestoga wagon with laser turrets? Commander Adama-12 with a chrome steel sixgun, stetson, and extragalactical Dog food? Raquel Welch in a rhinestone cowgirl outfit singing FILKSONGS with the OSMONDS? Holy felder carp! What the Frak was going on?

Cattlestar Galactica (!) is what, and before long I was gihhling and rolling about like a Spaceoline user at Marsport Hilda's. It was the Donny and Marie Osmond Hour, and I found myself wishing for a Fannish Parody special Hugo category. Apparently, even the Mormon Empire finds the "Lost Thirteen Tribes" schtick funny, funnier maybe than the rest of the population. It was a slick, Hollywood musical parody, totally outclassing anything I had ever seen, including the excellent 2001: A Space Opera at the '74 Disco or such videotic delights as Qonad the Barbarian vs The Kitchen Magician.

The plot was a classic Western Parody about two Amazon cowgirls from the planet Moo trying to hijack a supply of genetically-engineered alpha-falpa (sorry, Cordwainer). The goofy, pneumocephalic science was just right, with open airlock hatches and inertialess left turns with squealing tires in plain vacuum abounding. As though this wasn't enough, the same show had two other great skits, a NASA/JPL mission to look for evidence of life on the surface of Canada, and an Eric Von Ripoffigan expose on Ancient Astronauts' plumbing! Maybe there's hope for the Great Glass Teat after all. (I dunno, George. Just ponder all the time you wasted waiting for this to come along--B.)



IT MAY OR MAY NOT COME IN THE MAIL

-THOUGHTS ON PARTS

I heard something the other day which is worth watching out for. Some of those ever-present microswitches sold on the surplus market are treated at manufacture with a silicone moistureproofing agent. The manufacturer's specs on those switches plainly states that these switches are for use with AC currents only. Why? DC current tends to electrolyze the silicone substance and deposit a coating of--good grief--silicon dioxide on the switch contacts. Silicon dioxide is not known to be a good conductor. Naturally, surplus dealers either don't know or don't care about this caveat. If you use microswitches for anything, watch out for switch failures. Then buy your replacements somewhere else.

Watch out for sales tax. Ordering by mail is a good way to keep from feeding the beaurocratic pig. Considering most minimum orders, postage on small parts shipments is almost always less than sales tax. Buy out of state when you can. Buying a \$1700 computer from a computer store in New York State (7%) will nit you for \$120!!

Suppose you're young, poverty-stricken, unemployed, and still want to latch hold of some parts for tinkering. The easiest, cheapest way? Garbage-pick!

Don't sneer; it's how I got my start, and my junkbox is equalled by none. Next garbage day, take a spin up and down a few side streets. Even money you'll find one or two old TV's, at least one radio, and something else fitting into the miscellany category. Heave them into the trunk, and there you are.

What can you get from old TV's? Admittedly, not as much as you used to. TV tubes are almost never house-numbered, but TV transistors virtually always are. And many TV subsystems are dedicated IC's these days. Face it, a chroma subcarrier IC is good for being a chroma subcarrier IC, and that's about it. However, TV circuit boards have a lot of good dipped capacitors, disks, and quite a few potentiometers, if you can get to them before mold starts growing on the carbon. Plus, all TV's have at least one speaker, and sometimes it's a good speaker.

All TV's contain a couple of pounds of copper in the deflection yoke and possibly the power transformer. Power transformers aren't good for much these days, since by power they mean 500 mills at 600 volts. If you disintegrate old TV's on any regular basis, start a copper bin and gouge the stuff out of the yokes and old transformers. 25 pounds of the stuff may get you ten or twelve bucks from a scrap dealer, depending on the price of copper and the honesty of the scrap dealer. Maybe it's work but what the hell--it's free.

Do enough garbage picking and you tend to find the darndest things. I found a solid sterling silver candelabra in a garbage can three streets away. It still sits on my mother's bookcase, shiny and holding up three candles. Other "hits" include a diathermy machine (bizarre!) and a PBX switchboard. Do it long enough and you're liable to find just about anything.

Those who are too impatient to hunt week after week for their goodies, or those who hate to pick leftover spaghetti out of old TV chassis, my suggestion is: advertise! Put an ad in the cheapest local ad-paper you can find, and then sit by the phone with a big piece of paper. I filled a basement twice using this method, and in any sizable town your supply is virtually inexhaustible. Just ask for broken radios and TVs for experimentation by electronics student. Make it plain you're not buying, but also make it plain you'll pick it up. Put on your most honest face and people will shower you with stuff. Breaking it all down into useful parts and hardware is a lot of work, but you can't beat the price. Don't be proud; scrounge!

QUARKS

Greg Tomensky tells us that Attemptacon IV, alias CouleeCon II, will take place in LaCrosse Wisconsin, alias God's Country, the weekend of Oct. 26-28. They tried to get God as GOH, but God was doing Reno that weekend and they had to make do with A. E. Van Vogt. For more information contact Greg.

Cathy Hudson and Captain Al went dumostering in back of the Michigan Tech ROTC building, where Cathy is learning how to steer battleships, etc. It seems the Navy was closing down their recruiting station and was pitching all kinds of neat stuff like berets and braids and small arms handbooks and military formulae for things like plastique...next con should be dynamite, nyuk nyuk nyuk. They hung around too long and when the ROTC boys left for lunch, what did they see but their own sweet cadette Hudson, feet-up in a dump bin. The ROTC underclassman roast was the next day. Cathy still fans her delicate hindquarters...

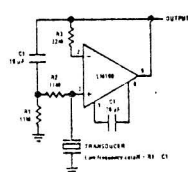
Cathy also writes that her folks are building a house and are considering "wiring" it with fiber optics cable before putting the walls up, but they are at a loss for a good application for the conduits. Anybody who has any ideas get in touch with her.

The address labels on your Pyros are not produced locally to me; Bob Halloran runs them in New Jersey. So, the quickest way to get your new addresses on the labels is to send a card to both Bob and me. If you tell only me it'll get onto the labels, but it might take awhile.

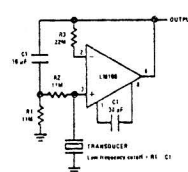
Bob is also the wizard responsible for those marvelous GT ID badges. They are a bitch to make, so once you get one, guard it with your life. They can be had from Bob for two bucks, but be patient; they can take awhile.

By now, as you know, we're in Rochester NY, and by the time you read this we'll be moving into our nice new house on Susquehanna Road. We've got almost half an acre on a street with no streetlights, a real woodburning fireplace and a big old-fashioned walkup attic. Soon there will be radio antennas, a permanent telescope pier, lots and lots of flowers and a vegetable garden. Come celebrate with us and share a real Berserker Weekend June 15, 16, and 17! We realize it's a long way, and we won't be upset with anyone for not coming, but our doors will be open. Come see us!

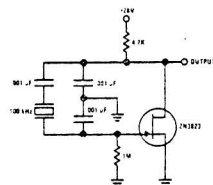
Another late note--I went out and put down \$2300 for a Compucolor II machine last week. Awesome. I bought the "loaded" version with 32K and super-deluxe graphics keyboard, but considering what you get stock for \$1495 (integral floppy and 75Mhz color monitor) it's probably more computer for your buck than you'll get anywhere else. Strongly recommended. More about it next issue.



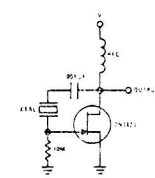
Amplifier for Piezoelectric Transducer



Amplifier for Piezoelectric Transducer

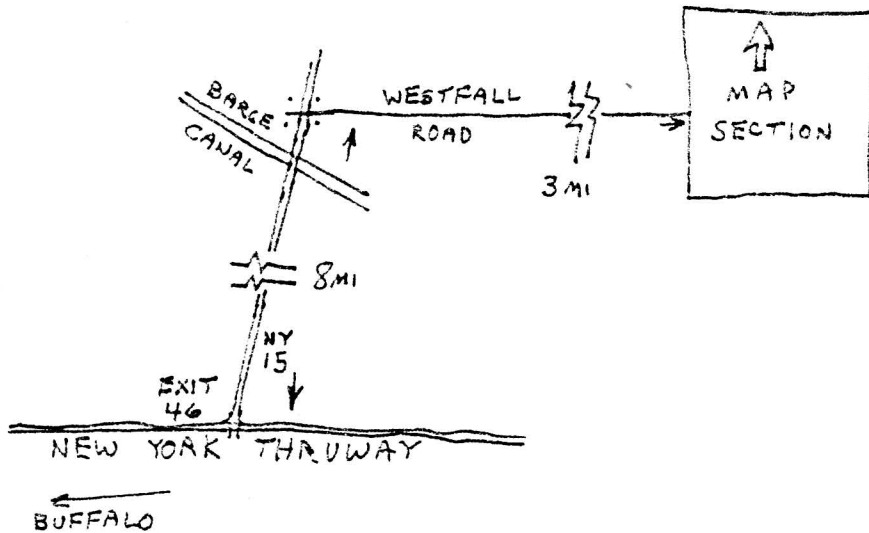
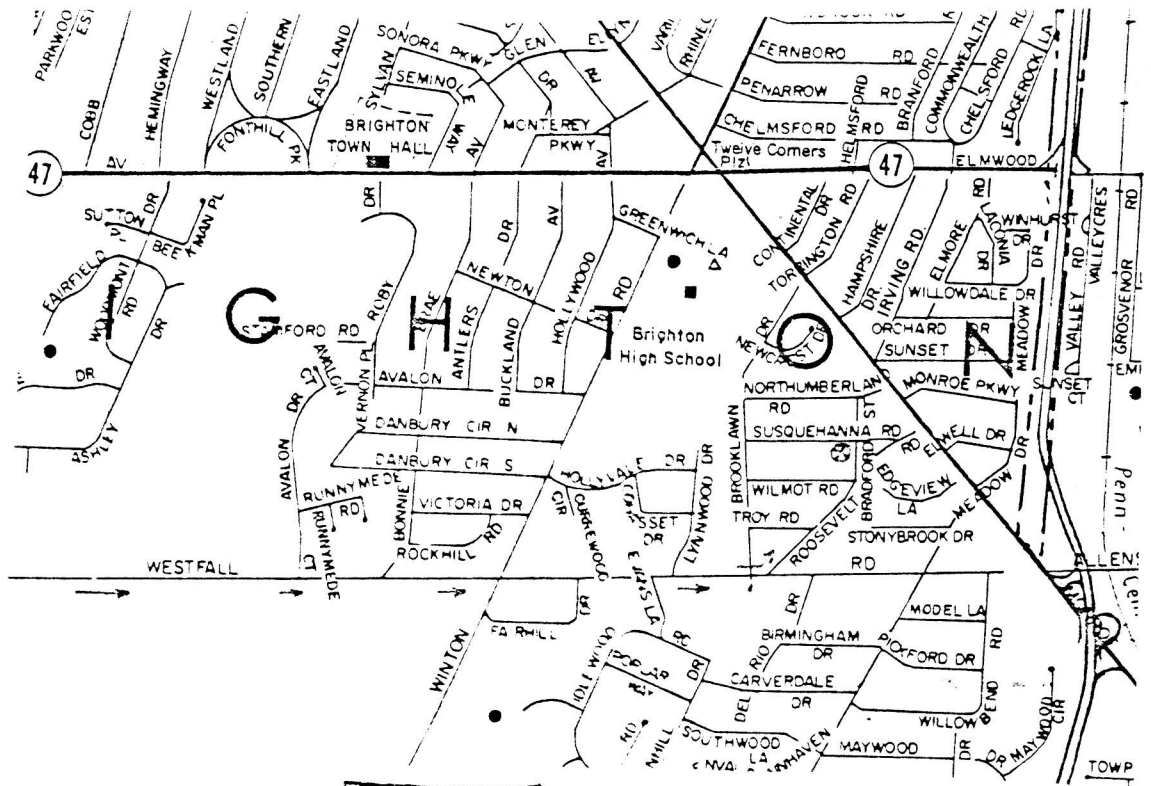


Stable Low Frequency Crystal Oscillator



JFET Pierce Crystal Oscillator

Take the New York Thruway to Exit 46. This is US 15, alias West Henrietta Road. Go north about 8 miles to Westfall Road. Go east (right turn) 3 miles to Roosevelt St., a side street. The third intersection on the left is Susquehanna, and we are the second house from the corner!



JEFF & CAROL DUNTEMANN
301 SUSQUEHANNA ROAD
ROCHESTER NY 14618

G
GENERAL
TECHNICS